

Synchrophasor
success

Virtual
audit

Beware the
Dark Web

Safe at
home

• CLOSED • **Circuit**

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION

MAY 2020

The power of **RESILIENCE**



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CLOSED Circuit

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On the cover

The ongoing pandemic does not prevent this inspection of one of WAPA's California-Oregon Transmission Project towers on the Sacramento River. See more of WAPA's crews in action on Page 16. (Photo by Will Schnyer)



Reflecting on these challenging times

It is astonishing to think how much has changed in our work and personal lives in two short months. We have all embarked on unprecedented journeys none of us could have imagined at the start of this promising year. Yet, because you are remarkable, we have adapted and persevered in these challenging times.

I want to thank each and every one of you, from the bottom of my heart, for your flexibility, professionalism and dedication to WAPA and its incredible mission to keep the lights on for customers across the West.

I am humbled by your commitment, patience and dogged determination to continue business as normally as possible, all the while traking your own personal journeys.

We all are traveling different paths, from the families with children at home 24/7 to the single employees going it alone, from the teleworkers to the craft employees in the field to the dispatchers still at the office, from the urban areas hit hardest to the rural expanses of our territory where this may seem more like a bizarre nightmare. Yet all of us, from our most-tenured employee to the newest members who joined WAPA in the midst of this pandemic, are traveling these difficult personal journeys together as a single WAPA family.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we continue to navigate extraordinary circumstances with unmatched complexity. Thanks to the foresight of the Office of Security and Emergency Management, WAPA had a pandemic plan. However, to quote famous boxer Mike Tyson, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

It is a tribute to the incredible men and women at WAPA that we have been able to stay upright, adjust our stance and keep fighting for the mission and our friends and families. It has certainly not been easy, and I commend all the members of my leadership team, the regional Emergency Operations Centers and the Multiregional Coordination Group for their tireless efforts to protect employees, preserve our critical mission and push toward the crucial deadlines and milestones facing WAPA in the very near future.

They may not know it, but more than 40 million Americans are grateful for your work and for serving like your lights depend on it. The changes to our lives are vast, but we will persist and overcome. This, too, shall pass.

I know we all have the lists of the things we will do once released from quarantine and stay-at-home orders. For me, the most inspiring is the day when I return to the office and am able to see you again.

Thank you for all you too. Stay safe. Stay strong. Stay in touch. See you soon.



WAPA rescues synchrophasor data

In late 2019, Peak Reliability Coordinator closed its doors for good. This resulted in a number of changes for WAPA. Southwest Power Pool began providing RC services to WAPA's Western Area Upper Great Plains - West, Western Area Colorado Missouri and Western Area Lower Colorado balancing authorities and the associated transmission operators Dec. 3. Sierra Nevada, a transmission operator within the Balancing Authority of Northern California, began receiving RC services from the California Independent System Operator.

What is a synchrophasor?

A synchrophasor is a sophisticated monitoring device that can measure the instantaneous voltage, current and frequency at specific locations on the grid. This gives operators a near-real-time picture of what is happening on the system, and allows them to make decisions to prevent power outages.

Source: energy.gov

Those were the big changes, but one other consideration of Peak RC's closure didn't get as much publicity: What would happen to Peak's historical synchrophasor data?

"People in the industry started to raise the question of what would happen to the synchrophasor data Peak had collected over its many years of operation," said Information Technology Specialist and Senior Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Advisor **Jodi Jensen**, "but there weren't quite as many people stepping forward to resolve the issue."

Part of the reason the question was going unresolved was that it wasn't as immediately pressing as other concerns. WAPA, like most others in the industry, was not using synchrophasor data for real-time visibility purposes; the data was mainly something that was being considered and evaluated for future use.

"There wasn't an immediate, urgent push from folks to save this data," Jensen said. "It was important to get this sorted out before Peak shut down and the

data was lost, but it wasn't getting the attention it needed."

A team effort

The potential value of the data wasn't lost on the Western Electricity Coordinating Council or the Department of Energy; both entities were concerned about its preservation.

"The DOE wanted to make sure it could have access to this data for continued research," said Jensen. "WAPA is a signatory to the data-sharing agreement that allows the department to study data from other entities, so the DOE needed us to be the conduit for this data."

She and Electrical Engineer **Josh Moyers** stepped up to help.

"I figured this could be an easy win for WAPA," Jensen said. "Peak gives us the tapes; we stick them on the shelf. If anyone needs them, we've got them." She laughed. "It turned out to not be that easy."

Peak RC was unable to simply hand over the tapes because they included data belonging to other companies as well. Peak RC had the right to retain data from those organizations, but WAPA did not.



“ Instead of investing a lot of technical resources, we succeeded through partnering and coordinating efforts. ”

Even though it would be much more work than she anticipated, Jensen realized the organization would have the honor of rescuing the data for the entire industry.

“WAPA would get to be a hero,” she said. “How could we not get a little bit excited about that?”

The problem was that WAPA did not have the resources to scour the tapes and make local copies of all of the appropriate data.

“IT did not have resources to spare,” Jensen explained. “Part of my goal was to achieve this without engaging too many resources. We were busy with the RC transition and we needed to not disrupt the transition to make this happen. And so we didn’t interrupt it. Instead of investing a lot of technical resources, we succeeded through partnering and coordinating efforts.”

She and Moyers worked with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and arranged for them to handle the copying of the synchrophasor data from the tapes. PNNL built the infrastruc-

ture necessary to copy the data. Jensen called this partnership “a big win.”

“They were really excited,” Jensen said. “We were, too. It’s a real example of proactive industry partnership. We were doing this for all of the Western Interconnection utilities. We were going to make it possible for others to get the data if it could help them.”

Would utilities be interested in past data, though? Wouldn’t recent data be more useful?

“There’s always new data being collected,” Jensen explained. “And it’s true that at some point the old data doesn’t carry quite the same value. But past data can still be valuable; it may have captured certain power-system events that aren’t going to happen again. If anybody wants to study those historic events, and learn from them, having access to any data that was captured at the time is crucial.”

Tight timelines

Nobody involved with the process knew quite how long it

would take; PNNL wouldn’t know what it was up against until it actually saw the data involved, and Peak RC was obviously not going to be around for much longer.

What’s more, Peak RC was still ultimately responsible for the data; before they could close out their obligations, they would have to deliver all of the tapes to a data and records management company.

“At that point those tapes would become very hard or impossible for people to get to,” Jensen explained. “Once it’s turned over, there’s no organization responsible for it anymore. It’s as good as gone. Getting the data copied before this happened was important.”

Time, as they say, was of the essence. The parties involved set a deadline of Nov. 28, 2019, knowing they would have to work very hard to finish in time.

“When someone says the word ‘data,’ it’s hard to envision what they actually mean,” explained Jensen. “In this case,

continued on Page 4

what it meant was boxes full of tapes, with the amount of data on them being measurable in terabytes. The copying process for each tape was significant."

Even physically relocating the tapes was a project in itself. Some tapes were in Loveland, Colorado, and the rest were in Vancouver, Canada. Senior Power Operations Specialist **Sean Erickson** facilitated the transfer of the Loveland tapes to WAPA. Then PNNL, which is in Portland, Oregon, traveled to get the tapes from WAPA.

"PNNL staff drove to Vancouver to pick up some of the tapes," Jensen said. "Their lab is around four hours from Vancouver, but they drove there. Then they flew out to Denver and drove up to Loveland to get the others, all so there was no chance for anything to get lost or damaged in shipping. They did a lot of work for us to make it easy for us. They were very good partners."

It took a lot of coordination and cooperation, but the task was completed three days ahead of the deadline.

"We returned the tapes to Peak on time!" Jensen said, still excited by the success of the initiative. "On Nov. 25, the tapes made it back to Peak, and Peak got them to the data and records management company."

PNNL copied the synchrophasor data for WAPA, WAPA can archive it for future reference and Peak RC closed out their responsibility for the data on time. No data was lost, damaged or compromised. Many would say this was an all-around success, but Jensen did walk away with some lessons learned.

"If I had known how long the process was going to take, I would have tried to get things moving a little sooner," she said. "But I don't want to dwell on that, because frankly I think everyone was thinking this is going to be too hard to do at all."

The fact that this happened – however long it took or however many parties were involved – is to be commended.

"When I first agreed to do this, if you look at the alternative, nobody was going to preserve this data and it would be gone," she said. "So it was worth a try. It was worth a try to get this data so people could keep and use it."

Good stewards

Now that WAPA has the data, the next step is to decide how to handle data extraction when requests are received.

"We want to enable other utilities to get a copy of their data if they want it," Jensen said. "If they don't want it but they want DOE to have it, we need to put together a legal document."

Getting letters of agreement in place to protect the data has required engagement and support from Operations Manager **Jon Aust**, Public Utilities Specialist **Jodee Miller** and General Attorney-Adviser **Koji Kawamura**. Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Kevin Howard** has also been instrumental through all stages of this project.

"We want to be very considerate of the other entities' data," Jensen said. "We want to go the extra mile to make sure we are honoring the data ownership piece of this."

Jensen is proud of what WAPA has managed to accomplish in such a small window of time through partnerships that will advance innovative research for the electric industry.

"We're helping DOE, we're partnering with the national labs, WECC was happy WAPA was going to play a role, Peak was happy because there are engineers there who realize the value of this effort for future innovation," she concluded. "People are really happy that we're saving the data. We really were able to create a win all around." □



Foreman II Electrician **Brian Brameier** guides a 500-kilovolt bushing, weighing around 5,000 pounds, into place.



Difficult work such as this requires the choreography of many craft employees to complete successfully, safely and without damage.



Foreman II Electrician **Tony Lucero** prepares a transformer for reinstallation of a bushing.

Mead work continues amid COVID

Photos by Jack Murray

The ongoing pandemic has had a necessary effect on the specific ways in which WAPA accomplishes its mission, but the need for reliable, affordable hydroelectricity continues. The organization's work of upgrading and maintaining the grid remains a top priority.

Crews in Desert Southwest demonstrated this commitment with recent work at Mead Substation in Nevada. The first week of April saw the start of a large-scale 230/500-kilovolt transformer rebuild project, which is expected to take around one month to complete.

"When the year began, it wasn't our initial plan to rebuild it," said Vice President of Transmission System Asset Management **Jack Murray**. "As maintenance was performed, however, issues were discovered that caused major concern."

Needless to say, the transformer was immediately and comprehensively tested in order to assess its reliability.

"After thorough testing, it was determined that we could have put the transformer back into service with just the planned maintenance," said Murray. "But that was not something we were comfortable with. The risk for catastrophic failure of the transformer during the peak summer season was too great. Reliability is paramount. We decided to move forward with replacement."

Transformer replacements are big jobs. In the case of Mead Substation, the crew working on the project consisted of around 10 craft employees. The replacement involved the use of cranes and bucket trucks to move and handle the components of the transformer. For example, just one of the 500-kV bushings weighs around two and a half tons.

It's not just the weight of the components that makes things difficult; there's also the fragility.

"Interesting factoid," Murray said, "the bushings are ceramic-coated, so installation of this behemoth requires finesse and care to avoid chipping or breaking any of the ceramic."

Removing and installing bushings requires careful coordination between the crane operator, the crew member in the lift, two crew members atop the transformer and two crew members inside the transformer, all of whom focus intently on guiding it into a relatively tight space without damaging it or anything else.

Of course, multiple employees sharing close quarters like this is not normally advisable or acceptable during a pandemic, but crews exercised the necessary precautions. Employees working fewer than six feet apart wore body suits and masks to ensure their personal safety.

One upcoming phase of the transformer replacement involves removing each of the nine radiators, relocating them and replacing gaskets, seals and other components in need of maintenance before reinstalling them.

"The entire crew worked like crazy to make sure this process went smoothly, and it did," said Murray. "That's a testament to just how experienced and knowledgeable our crews really are." □

Auditing compliance virtually is a WAPA win

By John Flynt

During the first week in March, Reliability Compliance Management Specialist **Al Slucher** connected with Vice President of Reliability and Compliance **Brent Sessions**. Slucher had a problem. With the eruption of COVID-19 across the western U.S., the mock audit he had been working for six months to set up at the Desert Southwest office in Phoenix, Arizona, was suddenly a big question mark.



Moving dozens of people to a virtual environment for an audit involved assuring everyone that the training they had received in the previous months would be just as effective.



WAPA employees and employees of peer and partner organizations had been reaching out to him with one basic concern: They did not want to risk traveling because they feared carrying or contracting COVID-19. This meant that the mock audit had to be cancelled or postponed. Or, as he ultimately decided, virtualized.

Slucher is known to many WAPA employees as an authority on Critical Infrastructure Protection standards. To ensure that WAPA fulfills the obligations CIP standards present, the Western Electric Coordinating Council audits WAPA's regions on a regular cycle. To prepare for these audits, Slucher and other reliability compliance managers work steadily throughout the year. A big part of this preparation is the mock audit.

The WECC audit focuses on WAPA demonstrating to WECC that it meets the standards. With a "mock" or practice audit, the target is the culture of WAPA itself.

In mock audits, those who will respond to WECC auditors get to experience both being auditors and responding to audits. With guidance from Reliability Compliance, Slucher took point in assembling one team for CIP compliance and a second team for operational compliance.

These teams together consisted of roughly 30 participants from WAPA and partner and peer organizations. All participants received training, with one of the chief objectives being to learn what qualifies as good evidence

of reliability in the electrical transmission industry.

Just as important as knowing what counts as evidence, however, is presenting that evidence.

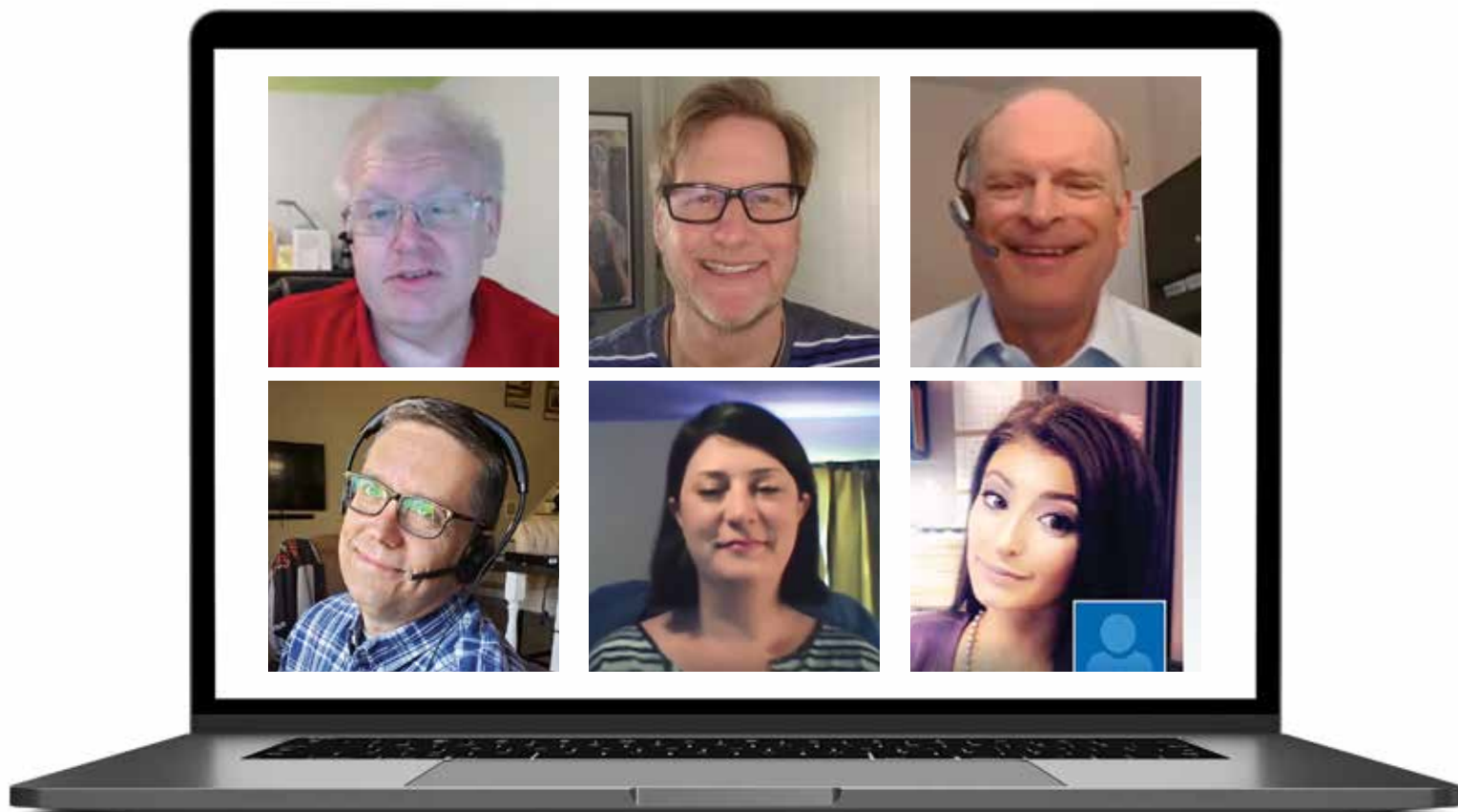
As Sessions explained, audits start with being able to communicate clearly about what you are doing to ensure reliability compliance. Gathering and presenting evidence should not be a reaction; it must be a proactive effort. Proactive participation should be ongoing. But at an audit, which is the manifestation of months of preparation, it is something that emerges best when everyone involved can gather to work in close context and communicate face to face.

With the situation confronting Slucher, the advantages of such interactions were out. Everything had to shift to being online.

One aspect of the shift was convincing everyone involved—as Reliability Compliance Management Specialist **Barry Jones** put it—that a team can play on different fields; the game is still the same. Moving dozens of people to a virtual environment for an audit involved assuring everyone that the training they had received in the previous months would be just as effective.

Being online involved making use of communication tools and focusing clearly on the primary media of information transfer.

The documentation specialist on the Compliance team is Technical Writer **Jennifer Williams**. She said that a leading challenge governing a



compliance reliability audit, actual or mock, is development of the reliability standard audit worksheet, or RSAW.

The RSAW is a document Slucher and other compliance managers help regions understand and develop. In a nutshell, it is a list of evidence of reliability that addresses the concerns that WECC has presented.

RSAs are developed in the months leading up to an audit. At the start of the audit, they are presented to the auditors. The auditors examine them to discover whether they do indeed provide adequate evidence of reliability. Requests for clarification or supplemental evidence can be made within the first hour of an audit. The requests then follow for the next four days.

Evidence is an important word in a number of ways for Reliability Compliance. As Reliability Compliance Management Specialist **Chris Johnson** pointed out, potential problems went beyond simply being able to process RSAs and show evidence.

Although WebEx, conference calls and applications such as SharePoint and Kiteworks have been in place for

some time at WAPA, a communications network providing immediate, ongoing interactions for everyone involved in the audit was something relatively new. As Johnson explained, nonverbal communications such as postures and expressions are part of an audit. What happens with personal encounters at mock and actual audits takes a number of forms.

Among other things, one message was clear from the Reliability Compliance team: The culture of trust is something that cannot be taken for granted. Working with others on a cooperative basis to explore reliability compliance is an essential aspect of success in a demanding industry. Though it is not possible to completely replicate personal interactions in a virtual context, it is possible to focus on two key components of personal interaction: continuity and immediacy.

By the time Slucher positioned himself at his computer on March 9 to launch the DSW mock audit, everything was in place to make continuity and immediacy possible. The key to continuity was clear communication of how to ask for and respond to

evidence requests. This understanding emerged from months of work by Reliability Compliance and audit participants.

Central to immediacy of communication was work by Secretary **Danielle Gioso**, who collaborated with Program Support Specialist **Alexia Mendoza** in a continuous conference session with Williams.

The session extended over the working hours of the five-day mock audit and allowed for participants to check on the status of requests and evidence as well as to get a sense of progress.

Slucher noted that the key to the success of the mock audit was “a perfect team.” One of the most important factors for success in the face of challenges such as COVID-19 is a combination of trust, cooperation, commitment and coordination. It is difficult to imagine a more effective response. □

Note: Flynt is a technical writer who works under the Wyandotte Services contract.



Inclusion and diversity, in that order

By Eric Barendsen

In early March, WAPA's Inclusion and Diversity Committee held its Going All-In on Inclusion and Diversity training and its biannual face-to-face meeting.

Spanning two and half days, the IDC's activities included training new committee members on the overall purpose behind inclusion and diversity, or I&D, efforts, discussing the current state of I&D across the organization and mapping out the next six months of work.

Hosted by consultant Kathleen Nalty, the training provided a crash course in how WAPA approaches I&D.

Most importantly, the training gave staff concrete examples of ways in which organizations with strong I&D practices perform more effectively. One Deloitte study of hundreds of companies found that organizations with advanced I&D had on average 2.3 times more cash flow per employee, 1.4 times more revenue and are 120% better at meeting financial targets.

"Inclusiveness is a skill," said Nalty. "It's a critical 21st century workplace skill that you need to practice so much it becomes second nature."

Science-based success

Drawing from numerous scientific studies on organizational behavior, attendees learned the business reasons for fostering work environments that value inclusion and how to make the case for stronger inclusion efforts to their managers and senior leaders.

"If organizations do not make the effort to educate themselves on the business benefits of inclusion and diversity, or support those trying to

implement a diverse and inclusive work environment, they are setting themselves up for mediocrity or, worse yet, failure," said Public Utilities Specialist **Tamala Gheller**.

According to Nalty, research has shown that inclusive and diverse teams that leverage their individual strengths offer more new ideas and work harder—each person contributes more, listens better and makes fewer mistakes. The reason for this is likely due to cognitive friction: being challenged to think in new ways when cues don't match expectations. Groups that are more heterogeneous working through their cognitive friction have 58% more accurate information exchange and make better business decisions 87% of the time.

The training also underscored inclusion as the "game changer" in its ability to attract and, more importantly, retain top talent from many different groups of society. By embedding inclusion in the way the organization does business, WAPA fosters an environment that maximizes the contributions of all employees.

The heart of I&D

Core concepts of Nalty's I&D training include:

- Implicit bias. We often display a variety of biases when the unconscious mind is not over-ridden by intentional, reasoned





WAPA's Inclusion and Diversity Committee held its Going All-In on Inclusion and Diversity training and its biannual face-to-face meeting in early March, hosted by training consultant Kathleen Nalty.

thought. Implicit bias that harms underrepresented groups is often expressed by people or organizations if left unexamined.

- Blind spots and hidden barriers. A common blind spot is unconsciously assigning menial activities disproportionately to women, such as notetaking, while an example of a hidden barrier is losing out on a promotion to a colleague who socializes more with the boss.
- Inclusive intelligence. Seeing through the lenses of another's race, gender, sexual orientation, disability status and so on allows one to develop empathy, illuminate blind spots and override implicit biases.
- Inclusive leaders. These are managers who regularly check their blind spots by deliberately creating diverse teams and psychologically safe spaces where all can speak up and give actionable feedback without fear of personal or professional harm or ridicule.

Attendees learned a wide range of ways to address their own implicit biases through behavior changes, such as actively seeking out people from different backgrounds and experiences. Find commonalities by looking for at least one trait you admire in each colleague, and when you notice

yourself judging someone based on a stereotype, interrupt it!

Another way to battle bias is to audit yourself regularly. Affinity bias, one of the most common and harmful unconscious biases, occurs when one prefers to socialize with people of similar backgrounds to the exclusion of others. As a supervisor, make sure affinity bias isn't swaying which employees you are investing in or giving second chances to.

"A realization I had coming out of the training was that someone who supports an inclusive and diverse workforce can be very lonely," explained Gheller. "Without support, it takes even more confidence to break away from a conscious or unconscious groupthink mentality."

Inclusion first

The IDC originated in response to a 2011 executive order that required federal agencies to promote diversity and inclusion in the workforce. WAPA's Equal Employment Opportunity office realized that a grassroots approach, if fully supported by leadership, would lead to success. Senior leadership soon recognized the strategic advantage of an inclusive workforce, and the IDC was launched.

Most organizations call these types of programs "diversity and inclusion," but WAPA's IDC founders decided to flip it to put the emphasis on inclusion first.

"After much discussion, the IDC determined that *inclusion* was something employees could immediately recognize and support," explained Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist **Julia Duffy**. "It was the 'secret sauce' that would bring diverse perspectives together."

The goals of inclusion are ultimately to empower everyone in the organization to feel equally advantaged, appreciated and engaged. Reaching these goals requires leaders to commit to fairness, exhibit humility, become cognizant of biases and have the courage to challenge them, maintain a growth mindset, address blind spots and value psychologically safe work environments.

"I&D is really the cornerstone of what I think has been one of the keys to our success over the last several years," said Administrator and CEO **Mark A. Gabriel**. "We make better decisions, we are more productive, have better employee engagement, higher employee satisfaction, and overall, it has helped build our culture to where we are today."

Facing the future

The IDC's face-to-face meeting in March showed participants how WAPA's deliberate focus on I&D has paid dividends.

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During her in-depth discussion about the 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey scores, Management and Program Analyst and Director of WAPA's Change Management Program **Stacey Decker** pointed out the remarkable improvements in WAPA's FEVS scores related to inclusion—particularly the 12.8 percentage point growth over five years in the “cooperative” category.

There is, however, still work to do.

“While it is on an upward trend, our greatest opportunity for growth continues to be in the ‘fairness’ category,” said Decker. More transparent advertising of promotion and detail opportunities and exposing staff to different areas of the organization through cross-functional teams could help, she explained.

The IDC participants pledged to look for more ways to target the fairness score for further improvement and to encourage their colleagues to stay engaged by participating in the FEVS and taking actions based on its results.

The meeting also helped set the stage for the next six months of work. Acting Chief Strategy Officer **Laura Dawson** presented a new timeline that plots major milestones of WAPA's I&D efforts since the IDC's inception. The timeline will be a useful tool to help the committee and management understand the cadence of I&D activities and identify gaps and opportunities.

The committee also discussed how to improve training for WAPA employees. The committee plans to tailor training formats to better reach craft employees in the field, explore expanded use of Learning Nucleus and find ways to enforce the three-hour-per-year I&D training requirement.

“One of the areas that we need increased management support is our training attendance,” said Desert Southwest Public Utilities Specialist and former committee chair **Ebony Dennis**. “We need to identify ways to get support at the middle management level.”

The IDC welcomed Safety and Occupational Health Managers

Krystall Valencia and **Matt Monroe** as the new co-chairs of the committee. “I am honored to serve as one of the IDC co-chairs as we continue to focus on increasing inclusion throughout WAPA,” Valencia said.

Additional plans for 2020 include spotlighting inclusion at work in both WAPA's offices and substations, developing new communications materials and including I&D requirements in all supervisors' performance plans.

In fiscal year 2019, senior leaders and extended leadership team members built standard I&D requirements into their supervisory performance standards. That same language is now being cascaded to all supervising managers.

The IDC believes that communicating more broadly about this change will show employees across the organization how seriously management takes this structural approach to improving the culture, with a bias toward inclusion. □

Note: Barendsen is a public affairs specialist.



Finding success while working remotely

By Laura Dawson

Those who are working remotely for the first time may be encountering a number of obstacles they didn't expect. Additionally, teleworking for one or two days here and there is much different from teleworking for weeks at a time, so even those with experience doing so might find themselves facing new difficulties.

Ultimately, extended periods of telework require balancing productivity with mental and emotional well-being, which can be more difficult than it at first seems.

Here are a few suggestions that can make a big difference in teleworking successfully.

Think ergonomics

You may not be an expert on ergonomics, but you will quickly figure out if your monitor is too low or your chair is at the wrong angle. Take the time to get set up comfortably using books or other household items to get the right height for you.

Remember that small pains and strains can turn into big long-term problems if not addressed, so don't overlook the importance of a proper work setup. Also, be sure to keep your work area properly lit and adjust the brightness of your laptop to keep your eyes from straining all day.

Take breaks, get moving

You may need to schedule breaks to ensure you get out of your chair and

get your eyes away from the screen. Without office interactions and interruptions, it's easy to keep working away, not realizing that your brain and body need a break.

Take a short walk around the block, go up and down the stairs a few times in a row, play with your kids or pets, have a little dance party or just pace around your home for a few minutes to stretch and get the blood flowing.

You can also be productive during your break by performing an easy, 15-minute household chore, such as emptying the dishwasher or straightening up.

Be visible and sociable

Lean in to the virtual world. Use video as much as possible to stay connected when meeting with others. Keep the lines of communication not just open but flowing. Your colleagues still want to hear about how things are going, whether good or bad.

It may seem awkward at first, but start checking in on a few of your colleagues each day will soon become routine. Send them messages or texts,

or give them a call to just say hello. Share a picture, or tell them a joke. Think of this as your "water cooler" time. Even if they don't have time to chat, they will likely appreciate the fact that you reached out.

Celebrate small wins

It's easy to focus only on large wins or major milestones, but tiny victories are great things to celebrate and celebrating them spreads positivity.

Think of it as a high five or saying "good job" in the hallway after a meeting. Reach out and share small successes, and point out wins for others to stay even more connected.

Show grace and be flexible

Working with new tools and technology brings extra stress. Mistakes, delays and reschedules will happen. Expect it. Be supportive and show your colleagues and friends that it's okay to not be perfect as we adjust to this temporary new normal.

Assume positive intent and recognize that whatever you're thinking or feeling, someone else is thinking or feeling it as well.

Working remotely can actually bring us closer together. There may be a few technology hurdles, a steep learning curve for some and lots of other challenges, but we really can grow closer as a work family as we work through the difficulties. □

Note: Dawson is acting chief strategy officer.

IT'S SO DARK

exploring the Dark Web

By Jim Ball

Y

ou may have heard the term “Dark Web” and wondered what it is or if you need to know or do anything about it. You’re not alone.

So what is it?

The Dark Web consists of systems on the internet designed for communicating or sharing information securely and anonymously.

There is no single “Dark Web”; it is not run by a single organization the way Facebook is. Instead, the Dark Web is a collection of different systems and networks managed by different people and used for a variety of purposes. These systems are connected to and are part of the internet. You generally will not find them using normal search engines, however. You often need special software to access them.

One example is the Tor Project. To access this Dark Web, download and install the Tor Browser. When you connect to web servers using the Tor Browser, your encrypted traffic travels through other computers also using Tor. As it hops through these computers, the source IP address changes—meaning that when you get to the website, your online activity is anonymized.

Other examples of Dark Webs include Zeronet, Freenet and I2P.

Who uses it?

Cybercriminals rely on the Dark Web. They maintain websites and forums on the Dark Web to enable their criminal activities, such as purchasing drugs or selling gigabytes of hacked data—all anonymously and securely.

For example, when a cybercriminal hacks a bank or an online shopping store, they steal as much information as they can, then sell that information to other cybercriminals on sites located on the Dark Web.

There are also legitimate uses for the Dark Web. For example, in countries where censorship is rampant, people use Dark Web networks to share information and see what else is happening in the world, while protecting their privacy and remaining anonymous.

Journalists, whistleblowers and privacy-minded people use the Dark

Web to increase their anonymity and bypass censorship. In addition, individuals like these can use technologies such as the Tor Browser not only to access the Dark Web, but to anonymously browse the regular internet.

What should I do?

Unless you have a specific reason to access the Dark Web, we caution you against it. Some Dark Web sites are used for illegal purposes; many of the sites will use your computer in a peer network to accomplish their goals, and in some cases your computer may even be probed or attacked.

Some companies offer monitoring services to let you know if your name or other information has been stolen by cybercriminals and found on the Dark Web. The actual value of these services is questionable. The best way to protect yourself is to assume some of your information is already on the Dark Web, being used by cybercriminals.

Be suspicious of any phone calls or emails pretending to be an official organization and pressuring you into taking an action, such as paying a fine. Criminals may even use information they found about you to create a personalized attack.

Monitor your credit-card and bank statements; perhaps even set up daily alerts for any transactions that happen. This will help you detect if any financial fraud is happening. If you do detect it, report it to your credit-card company or bank right away.

Put a freeze on your credit score. It does not impact how you can use your credit card and is one of the most effective steps you can take to protect yourself from identity theft.

What if I accidentally connect to the Dark Web?

As mentioned above, the Dark Web is connected to the internet, but without extra tools it is not easily found. Simply conducting a search will not connect you to the Dark Web.

Should you find yourself or your information on the Dark Web, however, there are a few ways to help protect your data from getting into the hands of someone else.

Scan your computer with an anti-virus program. If malware is found, consider changing any password associated with an account you may have used on that computer.

Create a secure password. This includes making your password 12-15 characters long; avoiding “real” words or sentences; combining uppercase and lowercase letters; and adding numbers and symbols. Better still, use a passphrase like `Ih@teth!s st1nk!ngC0^id-19!`

You can also set up a “garbage” email account. This is an account that you can use for anything unimportant that requires an email address. For example, if you use a calorie-tracking app, instead of signing up using your primary email, use your garbage email.

Practice smart transaction habits to prevent phishing. Now that you know what type of information you could be giving away, only give your information to websites that you know are reliable. Never give out your information to anyone via email. Call the company using the contact information listed on their verified website. Tell them you received an email and let them verify that the email you received is legitimate.

Try two-factor identification. Two-factor identification adds an extra layer of security. If a criminal has stolen your username and password, they will now also have to verify their login attempt using a verification code, which is usually sent to your phone.

Now that you know what the Dark Web is and are more cognizant of giving your data out, remember that it only takes one lazy password or sale from an unsecured site to leak your information onto the Dark Web. □

Note: Ball is WAPA's vice president of Information Technology – Cyber Security. Leah Shapiro contributed to this story.

Staying safe at work... at home

By Paul Robbins

A large number of WAPA employees are teleworking, and many face the challenge of creating makeshift computer stations and office areas to meet their needs. Home office setups can pose electrical hazards that increase the chances of fire or injury.



This is a fitting topic during May, which is National Electrical Safety Month as designated by the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

The three common home office electrical hazards are surge protectors, extension cords and overloaded electrical circuits.

Surge protectors

Surge protectors, also known as power strips, are multiple-outlet devices containing electronic components that provide electrical surge protection.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, they are designed for low-power electrical loads such as computers, audio and video components and other devices. Surge protectors are not intended for high powered loads required by major appliances such as a space heater, microwave oven or refrigerator.

One of the biggest misuses of the surge protector, according to the U.S. Office of Compliance is the practice of series connecting, also known as daisy chaining. This occurs when multiple units are plugged into each other or connected by extension cords. The goal of daisy chaining is to increase the number of outlets or the length of the unit's power cord in order to reach a wall plug.

Daisy-chained surge protectors can cause an overload of electrical current, resulting in a fire or tripped circuit breaker, which will de-energize your computer or other equipment that is plugged in.

This practice defeats the original purpose of surge protectors. Select a surge protector that will reach the wall outlet or move your furniture to accom-

modate the situation. Also, be sure the surge protector sits flat on the floor and is not damaged.

Extension cords

Extension cords should be properly rated for indoor use and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratories.

Inspect cords for exposed wiring and other damage. This can happen when a cord is pinched under furniture, a window or door. Damage can also occur if the cord is stapled or nailed in place.

Do not create fire hazards by running a cord through ceilings, walls or beneath carpets or rugs. If a cord feels hot, unplug it immediately and throw it away.

Extension cords are intended for temporary use, not as permanent wiring solutions. If you are relying too much on them, you probably do not have enough outlets in your home. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add outlets as needed.

Extension cords, surge protectors and other home office electronics can also pose tripping hazards; keep them out of doorways and foot-traffic areas.

Overloaded electrical circuits

More home-office equipment means increased load on your home's electrical system and circuits. In addition to the topics already addressed, the following tips will help keep your system balanced.

Major appliances should be plugged directly into wall outlets, never into a multi-outlet converter, extension cord or surge protector. Only one heat-producing appliance

should be plugged into an outlet at a time. Don't overload outlets with plugs, converters or extension cords.

Be aware of overloaded-circuit warning signs. Lights may dim, blink or flicker; electrical wall plates might be warm or discolored; and wall switches or outlets can buzz, crackle, sizzle or smell like something is burning.

Frequently blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers are also warning signs. You may even feel a mild tingling sensation or shock when touching switches, outlets or appliances. If you experience any of these hazards, call a qualified electrician and have it checked immediately.

Teleworking increases the chance for electrical hazards. Every WAPA employee needs to be their own safety specialist at home. Perform a home-office Job Hazard Analysis; look around your work space, identify hazards and remove or reduce the risks involved.

Do what is safe and protect your home and its occupants from fire and injury. □

Note: Robbins is a technical writer who works under the Cherokee Nation Strategic Programs contract.

For more information, visit esfi.org



Rapid Recaps

Work continues without interruption

The COVID-19 pandemic is in full swing, but WAPA's dedicated staff is not slowing down. Here is just a small glimpse into their ongoing work keeping the lights on.



Line crews perform steel A-frame replacement at Tracy Substation in California.



Sierra Nevada linemen practice social distancing while working to ensure their safety.



Field Maintenance Manager *Billy Weber* shows off a WAPA logo identifying this vehicle as being on essential business.



Field employees perform vegetation management at the Airport-to-Boyd 115-kilovolt transmission line near Centerra Mall in Loveland, Colorado.



Line crews discovered this broken crossarm while on aerial patrol in Gering, Nebraska. It was immediately reported, a crew was dispatched and the crossarm was replaced without issue.



The Rocky Mountain region established an “RV park,” preparing for the potential event of sequestration.

Brief Transmissions

Update contact information in Outlook

Have you taken a look at your information in the Outlook Global Address List? Does it need to be updated? Have you noticed that someone else's information is incorrect? You can now initiate a change or update in the Service Portal by selecting "Modify Employee Data."



All employees are encouraged to review their information in the global address list and ensure it is correct so that teammates, stakeholders and internal customers and partners have access to reliable information.

The Service Portal offers the quickest way to do this without tying up additional resources in the WAPA IT Call Center. For step-by-step instructions, read the associated knowledge article, which you can access by typing "modify employee data" into the Service Portal search bar.

Access the Service Portal by visiting [myWAPA, Service Portal](#)



Statistical appendix published

The Fiscal Year 2019 Statistical Appendix is now available.

This document serves as an appendix to the annual report and contains around 150 pages of operational and financial data.

The printing of physical copies has been delayed due to the ongoing pandemic. They will be distributed as soon as they are available.

View or download the complete statistical appendix at [wapa.gov, The Source, Annual Reports](#)



WAPA welcomes new chief of staff

On April 12, Melissa Ardis became WAPA's new chief of staff. In this role she will help ensure consistency in policy, direction and compliance with overall Department of Energy and Secretarial policy and priorities, as well as administration objectives.

She also acts as Administrator and CEO Mark

A. Gabriel's representative to other WAPA offices and provides expert advice to internal and external groups on program plans, strategies, resource requirements and performance objectives.

Ardis began her federal career at the Department of Energy's Golden Field Office and Office of Electricity in 2009 where she was an environmental protection specialist. She joined WAPA in April 2016 as a Natural Resources specialist. In 2019, Ardis served as acting chief of staff for five months, helping coordinate and plan senior management and Extended Leadership Team meetings.

Ardis also supported the hiring of senior executive service managers and provided extensive input on WAPA's performance metrics. She planned the 2019 Annual Customer Meeting, was a key member of the Leadership Summit Planning Committee and has worked extensively with WAPA's customers.

"Melissa is a change leader at WAPA, and I am confident her leadership, organization and change-management skills will provide numerous benefits to the senior management team and the chief of staff role," said Gabriel in his announcement. "Please join me in welcoming Melissa to her new position."



Welcome!